

ABSTRACT

The present invention shows that DNA vaccine vectors can be improved by removal of CpG-N motifs and optional addition of CpG-S motifs. In addition, for high and long-lasting levels of expression, the optimized vector should include a promoter/enhancer that is not down-regulated by the cytokines induced by the immunostimulatory CpG motifs. Vectors and methods of use for immunostimulation are provided herein. The invention also provides improved gene therapy vectors by determining the CpG-N and CpG-S motifs present in the construct, removing stimulatory CpG (CpG-S) motifs and/or inserting neutralizing CpG (CpG-N) motifs, thereby producing a nucleic acid construct providing enhanced expression of the therapeutic polypeptide. Methods of use for such vectors are also included herein.

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